DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 123 CE 080 134

TITLE	Work Motivation. Symposium 33. [Concurrent Symposium Session at AHRD Annual Conference, 2000.]
PUB DATE	2000-03-08
NOTE	24p.; In: Academy of Human Resource Development Conference Proceedings (Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, March 8-12, 2000); see CE 080 095.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Human Resources; *Intervention; *Job Performance; Job Satisfaction; *Labor Force Development; *Labor Turnover; *Motivation; Performance Factors; Performance Technology; Public Service; Public Service Occupations; *Work Attitudes; Work Environment; Work Ethic

ABSTRACT

Three presentations are provided from Symposium 33, Work Motivation, of the Academy of Human Resource Development (HRD) 2000 Conference Proceedings. "An Attitudinal Examination of the Role of HRD in Voluntary Turnover in Public Service Organizations" (Kenneth R. Bartlett, William R. McKinney) compares public service managers who voluntarily left their job in the previous year against a sample of managers in the same or equivalent positions. It finds that job satisfaction did not differ between the two samples, but suggests that shock or trigger events may initiate a series of psychological deliberations that result in a decision to remain or leave. "A Passion for Work: Developing and Maintaining Motivation" (Patricia Boverie, Michael Kroth) presents a model for a transformational process for developing a passion to work substantiated by conducting two studies. Analysis leads to synthesis of five keys for developing passion and occupational intimacy. "The Influence of Multiple Performance Interventions on Employee Turnover: A Case Study" (Tim Hatcher) reports a study that addressed employee turnover in a textile plant as a multi-faceted performance issue and identified causes of turnover through a performance analysis and results of implementation of multiple interventions designed to influence employee turnover. The papers contain reference sections. (YLB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 441 123

2000 AHRD Conference

Work Motivation

Symposium 33

Bartlett/Boverie/
Hatcher

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Raleigh-Durham, NC

March 8 - 12, 2000

CE 080 134

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

An Attitudinal Examination of the Role of HRD in Voluntary Turnover in Public Service Organizations

Kenneth R. Bartlett
University of Minnesota

William R. McKinney
University of Illinois

This study examines the role of the work related attitudes of job satisfaction, organizational commitment along with attitudes related to HRD in voluntary turnover decisions. A sample of public service managers who voluntarily left their job in the previous year are compared against a sample of managers in the same or equivalent positions. The implication of HRD in public service organizations is examined along with recommendations for further research of the role of HRD in turnover decisions.

Keywords: Work-Related Attitudes, Turnover, Public Service Organizations

Human resource management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) practices are increasingly scrutinized for their contribution to desired organizational outcomes. This is especially true during this current period of economic growth, low unemployment, and skilled labor shortages within many professional occupations in the United States service sector. As the value of human resources are increasingly realized in service organizations managing the flow and productivity of people employed assumes greater importance. Of central focus is gaining a greater understanding of the issues leading to the unplanned outflow of people, referred to as turnover. Turnover reflects the situation whereby an employee permanently ceases working for an organization. As a topic of HRM turnover has assumed greater importance as the monetary and non-financial costs of replacing and retraining employees is more thoroughly understood. HRD is also interested in this topic as turnover increases training and development program costs and raises issues related to ensuring that the knowledge of the departing employee is transferred to the new employee. Previous research has determined that HRM and HRD practices impact employee behaviors such as productivity and turnover as well as short and long-term measures of organizational financial performance (Huselid, 1995). The impact of this research stream has renewed calls for organizations to focus on HRM and HRD practices and programs that produce desired organizational outcomes. This study seeks to add new knowledge in regards to work-related attitudes, perceptions of HRD, and turnover in public service organizations.

Problem Statement

Almost every city and town in the United States has a public park, recreation and leisure service agency to provide a wide array of activities, programs, facilities, and information. These public agencies have remained the dominant delivery agent for these services for almost 100 years (Sessoms, 1987) despite competition from private for-profit firms and not-for-profit organizations. Hamilton (1995) notes that these agencies are seen as being an "archetype of most small public agencies due to their small size and emphasis on administration of specific programs and activities requiring specialized training" (p. 397).

There is support that public leisure agencies are increasingly recognizing the role of the human resources they employee for the successful achievement of delivering park and recreation services to the public in part because the human resources employed often represents the largest single expenditure in annual operating budgets (Rodney & Toalson, 1981; McKinney & Yen, 1989). Despite the lack of research into HRD practices and turnover in this form of public service agency it is noted that there is an increased reliance on part-time employees in local parks and recreation departments (Crompton & McGregor, 1994, Gladwell & Sellers, 1997) and a continued movement of full-time employees seeking employment in the private sector of the leisure industry or within different industries. These and other changes in the operating environment of public leisure agencies have focused the attention of managers and professional park and recreational associations on the retention of quality managerial level employees.

Copyright © 2000, Kenneth R. Bartlett & William R. McKinney

More specifically, there is concern that employees may seek employment in public leisure agencies to benefit from training and development opportunities to build managerial experience and skill levels before seeking employment in other public and private organizations.

A wealth of literature examines the casual influences of turnover, and to a lesser extent, the impact of turnover on an organization. The vast majority of this previous theoretical and empirical work has focused on private firms driven by a profit motive. Within the service sector and more specifically the public service sector, a smaller number of studies have examined turnover. Yet, one form of public agency, public leisure service organizations, have been largely ignored. This research study will examine the role of work-related attitudes and HRD practices in the voluntary turnover of managerial level employees in public leisure organizations. This analysis will compare attitudes of recent voluntarily departed employees with current employees in identical or similar job positions.

Theoretical Framework

Turnover research has been a consistent theme within both the human resource and organizational behavior literature for over 30 years (Abelson, 1996) because of the costs associated with employees voluntarily leaving the organization (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). High rates of turnover tend to raise training costs, reduce overall efficiency, and disrupt other workers (Arnold, Cooper & Robertson, 1998). Over a decade ago an important development in the turnover literature was the realization that two types of voluntarily turnover occur, avoidable and unavoidable (Abelson, 1987). A related theme is a challenge to the assumption that turnover is a dysfunctional element that organizations should aim to minimize (Dalton, & Todor, 1993). These authors posit that it isn't how many; rather it's who is leaving. Despite the fact that turnover maybe beneficial for the organization high rates of avoidable turnover among full-time managerial and administrative staff tends to be an issue of concern. Turnover models have traditionally relied on the role of work-related attitudes in leading to the decision to leave. Two of the most frequently used measures of work-related attitudes in studies of turnover are organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Employees characterized by low job satisfaction and low levels of commitment are more likely to leave an organization.

In general terms, organizational commitment can be thought of as the level of attachment felt towards the organization in which one is employed (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The importance of organizational commitment is supported by empirical findings that show high levels of organizational commitment are consistently associated with low turnover, limited tardiness, and lower levels of absenteeism, (Jaros, 1997; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Job satisfaction reflects an individual's attitude toward his or her job and can be considered as either a global feeling towards the job or as related attitude about various aspects or facets of the job (Spector, 1997). The correlation of job satisfaction to turnover has dominated many existing turnover models with it now regarded that 'this correlation is causal – job dissatisfaction leads to turnover"(Spector, 1997, p.62). The attitudinal models of turnover have also relied on measures of turnover intentions which reflects the attitude of an individual towards their continued employment within an organization. Turnover intentions are correlated with lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment suggesting that those who have formulated the intention to turnover can be characterized as having lower levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Lee and Mitchell (1994) have suggested an alternative theory of turnover, which implies that organizational commitment and job satisfaction play less of a role in the decision to turnover than traditional models. They state that turnover decisions are automatic or driven by a pre-determined script developed by employees. Their unfolding model of turnover suggests that employees voluntarily quit in order to carry out a previously developed action plan or script that follows triggering events or shocks occurring in both their work and non-work life. It is possible that dissatisfaction with HRD is one script that results in turnover. For example, if an employee feels that are receiving inadequate opportunities for training and development then pre-prepared action plans associated with leaving their current job are enacted. The unfolding model of voluntary turnover is finding support as it recognizes that 'turnover decision processes may be considerably more complex than indicated in previous models" (Maertz & Campion, 1998, p.71). The highlights the need for the application of alternative models of turnover, ongoing testing of existing models, and further investigations of the role of HRD in turnover decisions.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate work-related attitudes influencing the decision of full-time staff to voluntarily depart from employment in a public leisure service agency. To accomplish this an applied survey research design was used to assess relevant work related attitudes related to turnover in a sample of voluntarily departed and current employees in comparable positions to the departed employed in public park and recreation agencies. The voluntary departure of professional, administrative, and executive personnel in public leisure agencies within Illinois has recently emerged as a key area of concern for the two statewide professional organizations - the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) and the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD). More specifically, the stated research questions for this study were:

> *Do differences exist between measures of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceptions related to HRD for voluntarily departed and current employees in comparable positions in public leisure service agencies?*

Methodology

This mixed methodology study involved all 288 public park and recreation agencies in Illinois. The vast majority of these public agencies are park districts (87%) however, other agency types include municipal park and recreation departments, playground commissions, and forest preserve districts. All agencies were sent a letter asking them to identify and provide the name, position, and last known address of the most recent voluntarily departed (within the previous twelve months) employee holding a full-time, non-exempt or full-time exempt professional or managerial position. These individuals (voluntarily departed) were then sent a short questionnaire. An identical questionnaire was sent to the agency for completion by two employees identified by the executive director with the identical or closest related position(s) to the voluntarily departed employee. Data collection was conducted using an adaptation of the Salant & Dillman (1994) total design technique.

The instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), designed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, (1974), was used to measure commitment. The OCQ is measured with 15 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1985) was used because of its high validity and reliability as well as its suitability to service organization settings. The JSS is a 36 item, nine-facet scale to assess employee attitudes about the job and aspects of the job. The nine facets of job satisfaction are Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent Rewards (performance based rewards), Operating Procedures (required rules and procedures), Coworkers, Nature of Work, and Communication. A series of open-ended questions related to the events that might lead to the formation of turnover intentions asked of both current and departed employees were adapted from Lee, Mitchell, Wise, and Fireman (1996). In addition to working conditions, a number of questions related to HRD policies and programs. Both questionnaires for voluntarily departed and current employees contained the same items with wording to reflect either current or past employment. Data analysis used descriptive statistics, independent T-test for significant difference of means, and identification of themes from questions seeking a more qualitative response.

Results

A total of 37 voluntarily departed and 133 current employees completed the survey. Each organization with a voluntarily departed employee was represented with at least one current employee in the same or similar position. As organizational contacts distributed the survey the exact response rate cannot be determined. The 37 voluntarily departed employees, carried a wide range of job titles in their former position with recreation supervisor and program manager being the most frequently reported (27%). The respondents had an average of 6 years in their past position and 6.5 years in the organization prior to turnover. Two-thirds (66%) were female, and 66% had a bachelors degree. Of the 133 completed surveys from employees with comparable positions, the majority (35%) carried the job title of recreation supervisor/director. Current employees had an average of 5 years in their current position and 6.6 years with the organization. Respondents were 57% female and 65% had a bachelor's degree.

The results for organizational commitment and job satisfaction show that voluntarily departed employees reported slightly lower levels than their currently employed counterparts. These results are presented in Table 1. Significant differences in organizational commitment were found between the two samples with currently employed

reporting higher levels. On the whole, those currently employed were more likely to be satisfied with their job than those who voluntarily departed, although currently employed reported lower satisfaction with operating conditions such as organizational rules, policies and procedures that those voluntarily departed. Of the nine job satisfaction facets, only satisfaction with supervision was significantly different between voluntarily departed and currently employed.

Table 1
Means And Mean Differences Of Organizational Commitment And Job Satisfaction Between Departed And Current Employees.

Variable	Departed N = 37	Currently employed N = 134	T statistic	df	Sig
	Mean	Mean			
Total organizational commitment	4.8	5.3	2.76	169	.006
Job satisfaction subscale					
Pay	14.0	14.6	.66	169	.511
Promotion	11.6	12.4	.95	169	.342
Supervision	17.9	20.2	2.42	48.42	.019
Fringe benefits	17.7	17.7	.04	169	.964
Contingent rewards	14.2	15.5	1.40	169	1.64
Operating conditions	14.4	14.2	-.31	169	.751
Co-workers	17.8	18.8	1.41	169	.160
Nature of work	19.8	20.6	1.25	169	.213
Communication	16.1	16.7	.78	169	.438
Total job satisfaction	142.4	149.3	1.59	169	.113

The more qualitative responses in which voluntarily departed respondents described the circumstance that surrounded the time they first began to feel or think they should leave their job prove most enlightening. The responses range from early retirement opportunities, frustrations with clients, supervisors and boards, dissatisfaction at compensation, reward packages, and training opportunities, and the desire to seek new challenges in other agencies. Two main themes emerge from these descriptive responses surrounding the decision to leave. The first theme reflects elements of job design or the atmosphere at work as creating feelings towards turnover. The second major theme to emerge was the perceived lack of challenge associated with their former job. Several made specific mention of a lack of access to training and development opportunities for enhancing the challenge of the job. Several respondents expressed sadness that their agency could no longer provide the challenge and variety of job tasks that they now desire. It is worth noting that turnover for promotion or advancement did not appear as frequently as a desire to broaden and enrich work experiences.

Respondents currently employed in comparable positions were asked to describe the circumstances that would make them feel like they should leave their job. The most dominant themes emerging from this open-ended item reflected aspects of job design and the atmosphere at work. Continues access to training and development was mentioned as being vital to ensure that employees had the right skills and abilities for their job tasks and a positive and supportive work environment. Leaving as a result of a reduction in pay and/or benefits was the second most frequently reported reason for a currently employed to think about leaving, with perceived inequities in regards to salary increases, promotions, and opportunities for significant investments in development activities ranked third. The final dominate theme reflected leaving if their current job failed to provide challenge or if further career advancement was no longer possible within the organization.

The core questions related to perception related to HRD practices indicated that almost 60% of the voluntarily departed employees in this study reported that their career was progressing the way they expected it to. However, only 40% expressed that they felt that their supervisor provided them with guidance in their career planning in their previous position. Despite the lack of career planning guidance from supervisors, 87% stated that their previous job provided adequate opportunities for training and development. The majority (57%) now find themselves in a current job that is related to their previous position. Only 14% of the voluntarily departed

employees from public park and recreation agencies are currently employed in a very unrelated position to the one from which they left.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Very few studies have examined the potential role of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and perceptions with HRD practices towards employee turnover in public leisure service agencies. This study sought to extend previous turnover studies in this field by seeking the voice of those who had voluntarily decided to leave a park and recreation management position within the last year. Numerous data collection issues involving locating and soliciting responses from former employees arose highlighting the difficulty of using former employees in organizational studies of turnover. The finding of significant differences in organizational commitment between the two samples highlights the need for park and recreation managers to focus attention of the psychological level of attachment that employees feel. However, job satisfaction, with the exception of satisfaction with supervisors, was not found to differ between the two samples. This appears to contradict well-established turnover models. Alternatively, it may reflect the uniqueness of the public park and recreation profession or mirror changes occurring in the workplace regarding the attitude that people have towards their work. These findings may cause leisure service managers to alter the way in which turnover is viewed.

The results also appear to support the unfolding model of turnover of Lee and colleagues (1994, 1996, 1997). Recent research by Lee and Maurer (1997) among knowledge workers in high turnover occupations highlights that low levels of job satisfaction do not play the significant role in turnover once previously thought. The results of this study may suggest that public park and recreation employees experience shocks or events that initiate a series of psychological deliberations resulting in a decision to either remain or leave. The qualitative responses included in the present study highlight the shock or trigger events, such as lack of challenge, frustration with clients, supervisors and, boards, that both current and former employees feel would result in a turnover decision. It also appears that access to HRD may play a role as a possible shock for some employees. Further research using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies could provide much needed information on the type and magnitude of shock events and their role in the decision to leave employment with a public leisure organization.

New Knowledge For HRD Research

The findings of this study suggest many implications for administrators in regards to the management of employee retention in public park and recreation agencies. Human resource management practices including training and development can have a significant influence on the decision to remain or leave and organization. To date, very little research has explored the HRM and HRD strategies utilized by public leisure agencies and their impact on turnover. Possible solutions based on Mowday's (1984) buffering strategies for adapting to high turnover include the expansion of training and development programs to increase the capacity of human resources. Cross-training employees for multiple jobs increases the ability of the organization to minimize negative impacts following turnover. The management of beliefs about the causes for turnover is considered vital to avoid the creation of a turnover culture (Abelson, 1996) and negative images about turnover. Mowday (1984) also suggests that organizations create a core of highly committed employees. While high levels of commitment are desirable from all employees it is essential to ensure high commitment among a core group of key managerial employees. The results from this study have highlighted that significant differences exist in the level of organizational commitment between those who are currently employed and those who voluntarily left. While this may appear obvious it also suggests that commitment can be monitored and to a lesser extent managed for desirable organizational outcomes such as minimizing the negative effects of high turnover. The potential role of HRD in the establishment and maintenance of organizational commitment warrants further research.

References

Abelson, M. A. (1987). Examination of avoidable and unavoidable turnover. Journal of Applied Psychology, 72(3), 382-386

Abelson, M. A. (1996). Turnover cultures and the turnover audit. In G. R. Ferris & M. R. Buckley. Human resources management: Perspectives, context, functions, and outcomes. (3rd ed.). (pp. 526-535). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall,.

Arnold, J., Cooper, C. L., & Robertson, I. T. (1998). Work psychology: Understanding human behavior in the workplace. (3rd ed.). London, U.K.: Financial Times.

Crompton J.L., & McGregor, B. (1994). Trends in the Financing and Staffing of Local Government Park and Recreation Services 1964/65-1990/91. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 12, (3), 19-37.

Dalton, D. R., & Todor, W. D. (1993). Turnover, transfer, absenteeism: An interdependent perspective. Journal of Management, 19, 193-220.

Gladwell, N. J., & Sellers, J. R. (1997). Assessment of Fiscal Status and Financial Trends in Public Parks and Recreation Agencies in Medium-Sized Communities of Southeastern United States. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 15, (1), 1-15.

Hamilton, D. K. (1995). The personnel function in small public organizations. Public Personnel Management, 24(3), 399-411.

Hom, P. W., & Griffeth, R. W. (1995). Employee turnover. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western.

Huselid, M. A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. Academy of Management Journal, 38 (3), 635-672.

Jaros, S. (1997). An assessment of Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 51, 319-337

Lee, T. W., & Maurer, S. D. (1997). The retention of knowledge workers with the unfolding model of voluntary turnover. Human Resource Management Review, 7, 247-275.

Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. (1994). An alternative approach : The unfolding model of voluntary turnover. Academy of Management Review, 19, 51-89.

Lee, T. W., Mitchell, T. R., Wise, L., & Fireman, S. (1996). An unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover. Academy of Management Journal, 39, 5-36.

McKinney, W. R., &Yen. T. H. (1989). Personnel Management in Large U.S. Park and Recreation Organizations. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 7, (2), 1-25.

Maertz, C. P. Jr., & Campion, M. (1998). 25 years of voluntary turnover research: A review and critique. International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 13, 49-81.

Mathieu, J. E., & Zajac, D. (1990). A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment. Psychological Bulletin, 108, 171-194.

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mowday, R. T. (1984). Strategies for adapting to high rates of employee turnover. Human Resource Management, 23, (4), 365-380.

Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 14, 224-247.

Porter, L. W., Steers, R. M., Mowday, R. T., & Boulian, P. V. (1974). Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover among psychiatric technicians. Journal of Applied Psychology, 59, 603-609.

Rodney, L. S., & Toalson, R. F. (1981). Administration of recreation, parks, and leisure services. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Salant, P., & Dillman, D. (1994). How to conduct your own survey. New York: Wiley & Sons.

Sessoms, H. D. (1987). Reassessing the role of public leisure service. In J. Bannon (Ed.), Current issues in leisure services: Looking ahead in a time of transition. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association (ICMA).

Spector, P. E. (1985). Measurement of human service staff satisfaction: Development of the Job Satisfaction Survey. American Journal of Community Psychology, 13, 693-713.

Spector, P. E. (1997). Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

A Passion for Work: Developing and Maintaining Motivation

Patricia Boverie
University of New Mexico

Michael Kroth
Public Service Company of New Mexico

We present a model for a transformational process for developing a passion for work. To substantiate the model we conducted two studies gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. We interviewed 107 working adults, conducted 7 in-depth interviews, and collected 105 surveys on passion and work. Analysis led to the synthesis of five keys for developing passion and to a construct we call Occupational Intimacy. The studies and model are discussed as well as specific findings.

Keywords: Motivation, Employee Development, Emotions

Motivation has long been studied by organizational, educational, and clinical psychologists. There have been many different theories put forth to describe how to develop motivation within individuals, organizations, and systems. Despite the host of papers and books on the subject, motivation continues to be a national concern. Good employees' burnout, motivation turns to apathy, and there is a continual brain drain from organizations. The workplace of the future is going to be very different in how we recruit, develop and keep employees. Demographic researchers of the Generation Xer's paint a picture that includes sign-up bonus, no company loyalty and severe shortages of trained technical employees in the coming years (Bova & Kroth, 1999; Tulgan, 1998). Motivating employees will be key to keeping good people from leaving. Many companies are already facing these problems. In this paper we propose a model for examining motivation from an emotional perspective which also includes dimensions of environmental, biological and cognitive factors. The theoretical model is grounded in literature and drawn on the personal stories of people who both have and lack passion for their work.

Passion

Passion is defined as a deep, overwhelming emotion or boundless enthusiasm (Webster's, 1990). Freeman (1993) defines passion as a generalized feeling of enjoyment and absorption which comes from participation in an activity that one truly enjoys. He goes on to describe that the word passion is analogous to the German word "functionlust", which can be translated to be 'love of work.'

By virtue of being human, we all experience passion. Passion evokes images of deep commitment to another person, to an idea, or to a cause. We long for it; we sometimes curse it. Passion is at the root of all creative genius, personal transformation, and all notable events. Passion is emotional energy, it stimulates life, and energizes individuals to work towards a goal. It propels willpower, gives one boldness, and is an outlet for emotional, physical, and creative release.

Every person has the capacity for passion. Many do not lead passionate lives, however. The passion has been beaten out of them by society, or their work, or by significant people in their lives. We humans have the built-in power of choice. Therefore these people, somewhere along the line, decided - whether they knew it or not – to lead less passionate, more bland, less exciting, safer existence's.

Influences on Passion

Several factors influence our level of passion. Some are outside our control. For example, each person is born with a certain capacity for passion. Each person comes into the world with biological mechanisms which drive her or him. From our parents and grandparents we inherit a range of predispositions – including fight or flight

Copyright © 2000, Patricia Boverie & Michael Kroth

instincts, the drive to survive, and emotional tendencies. We are also powerfully affected by the first few years of our life. Changing the qualities which our parents and early environment foist upon us is difficult. We also can't control luck – whether or not we run into the right job at the right time or the right person in the right place is often outside our control.

Beyond these limiting factors, we have incredible opportunity to make our lives passionate ones. Within our power is the ability to make choices that lead to the kind of lives we can pursue with enthusiasm and energy. Within our power is the ability to discover the kind of work that we can follow with passion. Within our power is the discipline and determination to then create the life we imagine and yearn for. After taking into consideration the things that we cannot change, the rest is entirely up to us. If we want to have an exciting, intimate relationship with another person, if we want to make every day fun and enjoyable, if we want jobs and careers that are passionate to a very large extent, we can have them.

Today's new employees

Several researchers have been investigating the workforce of the future (Bova & Kroth, 1999; Tulgan, 1998). The terms Generation Xer's, Nexter's, and such have been associated with people entering the workforce today and continuing for the next ten to fifteen years. Because there will be fewer people to take the place of the current baby boomers, recruiting and keeping employees will be one of the toughest organizational tasks for at least the next two decades. The values of these new employees will emphasize less loyalty to organizations, more job-hopping, a greater importance on having fun, and quality time off. With the approximately 77 million boomers being replaced by only 44 million Gen Xer's (Losyk, 1997), organizations will increasingly need to try to motivate employees in order to keep them.

Today's new value emphases

Warren Bennis (1998) talks of the importance of purpose and leadership. He states that, "Purpose is a small word, two syllables, but it contains three major dimensions: passion, perspective, and meaning." (p. 5). He goes on to say, "I have never met a great leader without passion. Many leaders are rather soft-spoken, but when they talk they are passionate." (p 5).

Peter Senge (1999) also talks about the importance of passion and the values that typify it. He says,

> Our traditional system of management, based on the purpose of maximizing the shareholders' return, is the most well-designed system imaginable to produce consistently mediocre results. Companies like VISA, Shell, Toyota, Scania, and Interface have found that the key to success is not obsessively measuring costs and profits – it's nurturing the passion, imagination, creativity, persistence, patience, caring and desire to contribute. If you don't have those soft, unmeasurable things, you will never have an enterprise what can be highly successful. These organizations are managing performance in a way that is more consistent with how nature works. (p. 9)

America is going through a current passion for spirituality (Wolfe, 1998). Millions of Americans have gone through major shift in cultural values and personal behavior. It could be that after years of materialistic self-indulgence, boomers are looking in new ways to find meaning in their lives. They are looking at the realm of spirituality as the place to find this meaning.

Theoretical Framework

The basis of our model for developing and maintaining motivation is drawn from the research in the psychological field of passion. The development of our model began with a search for what makes people love their work. What makes a passionate employee? Why do passionate employees lose their passion? Passion has been studied in the literature, usually in the area of relationships and love. We borrowed the concepts from this research but instead of looking at relational love, we looked at love of work. Starting with Sternberg's (1988) seminal work, The Triangle of Love, the components of love are dissected and passion is viewed as playing a key role in emotional attachment. Sternberg defines passion as, "...the expression of desires and needs – such as for self-esteem, nurturance, affiliation, dominance, submission..." (p. 42). He goes on to say that passion tends to interact strongly with intimacy

and that these two fuel each other. Passion is what initially draws one into a situation. This led to our thinking of the role of intimacy and work. If intimacy fuels passion then how can we become 'intimate' or close to our work? What is 'occupational intimacy'? How can organizations foster this concept?

The developmental work of Freeman (1993) also influenced the model. Freeman looked at the lives of six historical figures and six living figures examining how passion influenced their lives and motivations. He used a four-factor interactive system of human motivation consisting of biological factors – a person's preparedness; environmental factors – rewards and punishments in the system; emotional factors – mostly emotional reactions; and cognitive factors – subjective meanings individuals give situations. He found that these four variables interacted to affect passion. And, that passion generally influences productivity.

Baumeister and Bratslavshy (1999) looked at how passion changes over time. They found that passion reflects the subjective perception of increasing intimacy. High passion is seen to be rising when intimacy is felt to be rising. Again we found the connection between passion and intimacy, between passion and cognitive perception, passion and environment. Other authors whose work influenced this model include Davis and Todd (1982), and Berscheid (1983) who all saw passion as a state of strong psychological arousal.

Apps (1996) looks at the spiritual, biological, intellectual, and emotional dimensions of teachers work. He prescribes a move from a more traditional approach to what he calls "teaching from the heart." This concept, which we borrow and rename 'working from the heart,' implies helping employees to understand themselves, what motivates them, and to use this depth of knowledge to begin to love their work, to form a connection; a connection which both feeds the individual and the organization.

Organizational theorists also have looked at motivation. Kouzes and Mico (1979), as well as others, found that environments have conflicts built into their structures which deflect motivation levels. A recurring theme in the current organizational literature is that of the role of passion, spirituality, and purpose in the lives of successful people [i.e., (Bolman & Deal, (1995); Covey, 1990; Handy, (1994); Harvey, (1994); Wheatly, (1992)]

Purpose of Study

Emotions in organizations usually are reluctantly acknowledged and then dismissed favoring rationality over non-rational thought (Beres & Wilson, 1997). Given the above factors which define the new workforce and values which are thought to be important and driving factors, our questions stem from the role of emotions in organizations, in particular, looking at the importance of passion to one's work, productivity, and motivation.

Our model seeks to understand the role of powerful emotions as they give rise to intense energy and determination, allowing employees to realize otherwise impossible achievements. By acknowledging these powerful emotions and sharing the reality of working in an emotional climate, organizations can capitalize on this energy, help to develop and maintain it, and keep their employees from seeking outside outlets for their vast emotional energy. Further, we want to look at how passion for work develops, ebbs and flows, is lost and refound. Lastly, we hope to discover the actual mechanisms for helping develop and maintain a passion for work.

Methods

A model for examining passion was developed translating the romantic love and sexual attraction mechanisms into a workable framework for discussing and understanding passion for work. In this model, 'passion' is not used to imply feelings of romantic love, rather, it is used as a term which implies a strong feeling of enjoyment towards work. Although strong passion can lead to negative results, i.e., burnout, disappointment, lowered expectations, it is the positive aspects that drive the theory – absorption in work, enjoyment of work, increased productivity, etc.

Four Determinates of Passion

Based on an extensive literature search and subsequent analysis, we proposed the following Determinates that yield positive results of passion. Our model assumes that there are underlying factors which influence passion (Freeman, 1993). These factors may or may not be out of our control. However, the Determinates are under our control. The Determinates are the basis for the passion development process in our model. The four proposed determinates are:

Determinate 1 – self-knowledge of emotional adaptability and emotional response patterns; a high EQ rating

Determinate 2 – self-knowledge of life mission; understanding and wanting to do the work

Determinate 3 – an environment which allows for occupational intimacy; ability to work autonomously, interdependently, in a situation conducive to work and a sense of enjoyment

Determinate 4 – ongoing cognitive and emotional development; the subjective as well as the objective development of meaning around the actual work.

In order to study our proposed model we conducted two studies. The first study was designed to provide data to substantiate the Factors underlying or influencing passion. The second study was to substantiate the Determinates or proposed processes of our model.

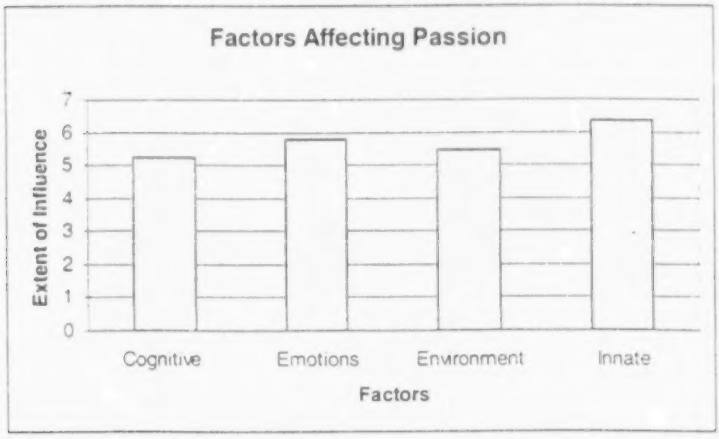
Study One: Survey

A survey was developed to gather data on the constructs of the model. A total of 105 working adults responded to 11 likert scale items. Questions dealt with processes and genesis of passion based on Freeman's (1993) four factors, such as,

1) How much of your feeling of passion is a thinking process?	*Not at all*			*Some*			*A great extent*	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

All four factors were found to be important to passion at work. Table 1, Factors Affecting Passion, shows the mean value of influence to passion of each of the four factors. All were found to be strong influences with innate personality as the highest influence on passion, followed by emotions, environment and thinking processes.

Table 1 Factors Affecting Passion



Study Two: Interviews

After finding validation for the four Factors, we completed short interviews with 107 working adults and then did 7 in-depth interviews with a sub-sample to develop our model and the four Determinates of passion. Both sets of interviews asked questions regarding where and when people have felt passionate. For example, people were asked what was the genesis of their passion, how did it affect their productivity, and what were the keys to regaining it. Each person was asked to describe a critical incident or example of a time when he or she and lost and regained passion, and what the factors were for each. For the large group only short answers were given. We then identified seven people who felt very passionate about their work and had achieved major accomplishments. These seven

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

interviewees were asked to go more deeply into their understanding of passion, its relationship to their work, and their history of passion and work. These interviewees included two men and five women.

The analysis of the qualitative data provided evidence of several barriers or detriments to having passion for work. These were boring or routine work, working in an overly controlled environment, feeling inadequate, and working under conditions of manipulation, dishonesty or lack of trust.

More important were several keys to helping develop passion for work. These findings are the result of all 107 interviews. These keys substantiated our model and helped us to refine it. The interviewees told us that there is a relationship between passion, self-knowledge, work environment, learning and productivity. People with passion for their work are more likely to work harder, more creatively.

Key #1 - Discovering

Passionate people have discovered work that excites them. For some it's easy--they know from early in life. Others have journaled, changed jobs, gone back to school, found a mentor, or followed career development advice. One person we talked to told this story.

"I was working with the poor, and committed to developing quality programs that aided clients in breaking the cycle of poverty. I was exposed to corruption, token programs and institutional politics that tied my hands so I couldn't affect policy. I left my position discouraged and disillusioned and doubted whether I could ever work in this field again. I read 'What Color is Your Parachute' (by Richard Bolles) and completed several exercises which led me to the conclusion that I would never be happy in a job where I couldn't have impact on policy. I have returned to my line of work and I am passionate about what I do. I want my team and our clients to share similar passion and focus about their lives, too!"

The first key is discovering what excites you. Smart organizations find ways to help their employees discover their passion.

Key #2 – Creating

Passionate people find ways to make their lives exciting, meaningful, and special. Taking what they've discovered about themselves, they shape their own lives to fit it. We talked to Robert, an entrepreneur who owns his own company. Successful at a young age in the supermarket business, Robert discovered that he would be unhappy spending his life managing stores so, with a wife and four children, he quit his job and returned to school, taking enormous personal risk. It has made all the difference, because since then he has owned and operated several successful businesses. Most important, he comes to work each day passionate about what he does.

The creating process involves setting goals, learning and developing, surrounding oneself in environments which encourage passion, and taking risks.

Key #3 – Risking

Risk is an important part of living passionately. Those living passionately invariably have taken or are taking risks. To do otherwise is to be safe, not learn, sit on your heels, and regret opportunities missed. For most people, the trick is to be thoughtful and intentional about risk-taking. It is taking risks that moves you toward passion and allow you to grow, but won't be devastating if unsuccessful. For some, a major risk would be to speak up in a meeting or to make a speech, for others, like Robert, a major risk would be to quit his job and go back to school. We tend to think of passion as adventurous and glamorous, but passion comes in many forms. A 54-year-old woman in the healthcare business told us how she took a risk that changed everything.

"I basically possess a passion for accurate coding and billing of healthcare services. I became very frustrated, disillusioned, and weary of billing for one department of physicians because they didn't appreciate the difficult position they were placing me in daily by submitting questionable billing. After numerous attempts to reach them had failed, I transferred to another department where my job was to identify improper billing and report it. I felt once again a renewed passion for the task and a sense of empowerment that I may be able to affect a change for the better."

Rather than taking the safe road and being miserable, this woman changed jobs, which made all the difference. Organizations can be very helpful in supporting this kind of risk-taking behavior. People who take risks are constantly learning—about themselves and about their work.

Key #4 – Learning

Passionate people are always learning, reinventing themselves, and exploring new things. You must be learning in your job to have passion. If you aren't, you want to either find new things to learn or move on to something new. A 37-year-old clerk told us that he is, *"passionate about my job when given a new challenge and allowed to be creative. I tend to lose passion when the job becomes stagnant."*

Learning involves having the ability to make choices. *"The field of plastic surgery always was exciting and challenging,"* a retired physician says, *"The ability to help others was quite rewarding until managed care came into play and we lost our ability to make decisions. It became a frustrating task!"*

People who are constantly learning are more likely to be passionate, and to feel confident about their abilities.

Key # 5 - Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that we have about our ability to do something. It powerfully affects our behavior. I may have the skills and talent to take a more challenging job, but if I believe that I'm incapable of being successful, I'm unlikely to apply for that job. Positive self-efficacy is developed by trying things and then evaluating how you do. People with low self-efficacy are unlikely to try new things, and hence lead less passionate lives. One of the most important aspects about self-efficacy is that we can change it from low to high. Often, taking little baby steps builds self-efficacy over time.

By taking little or big steps, we are taking *risks*, as we risk we *learn*, and as we learn we develop higher *self-efficacy*, our belief in ourselves, and that we can accomplish what we set out to do. All three, working together, advance our quest for a more passionate life.

Occupational Intimacy

Occupational Intimacy is a term we developed to represent the closeness which passionate people feel about their work. Like two passionate lovers, people in love with their task feel that their work is inseparable from themselves, it is a part of who they are. They feel a sense of personal commitment to what they do. They are emotional about it, they have strong feelings of dedication, care, support, and desire associated with what they do. Passion for work often involves receiving recognition and rewards, but many times people are so in love with their work that they would do it for the pure joy they feel about it. One person described occupational intimacy as devoting *"yourself to a job because you like it, enjoy it, and bring happiness to your fellow human beings."*

Another aspect of Occupational Intimacy is the relationship one feels towards the people they work with and the organization. This intimacy is high when one feels that the organization, the leaders, the managers and coworkers truly care about them and how they do their job.

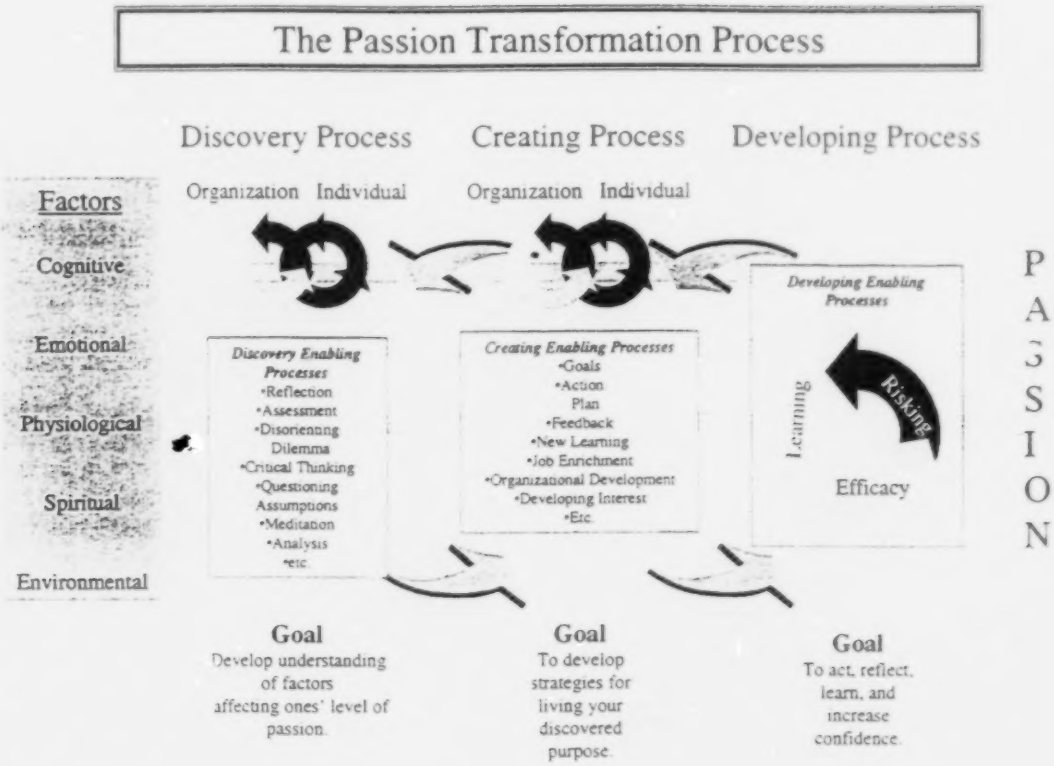
Practicing the five keys to passionate work—discovering, creating, risking, learning, and self-efficacy—leads to occupational intimacy…and passion. The result is what one person we talked to described as,

"Lighting up from the inside. Aliveness. Transcendence. Feeling totally present and absorbed. Joy. Wonder. Moving, inspiring, resonating, vibrating."

Passion Transformation Model

Our model (see Figure 1) relates the Factors underlying passion as inputs to a systematic process of Discovery and Creating, based on the four Determinates of passion, with the output resulting in greater passion. This same process can be used to develop passion for work, for relationships, or for life in general. Within the Discovery and Creating processes are Enabling Processes that work to define, develop, and promote passion. The Enabling Processes and the overriding processes of Discovery and Creating can be intertwined and repeated as necessary. This is a preliminary model as we continue to gather data to refine it.

Figure 1. Process Transformation Model



Importance to Human Resource Development

The goal of developing this model, and the continuing work to substantiate it, is to help develop and maintain passion in employees. The model is developmental in that it is first prescribed for individuals use. During this time the Determinates of self knowledge of emotionality and mission should be deliberately stressed and the individuals should come out of this period with clear self-understanding. The Determinates of organizational environment and ongoing development should be in place in organizations. This is primarily implemented through policy, administrative style, and professional development opportunities.

Little emphasis is placed on training individuals to love their jobs. Instead, administrators often attempt to 'motivate' through incentives. This model advocates training individuals to love their work though careful job selection, understanding, and placing an emphasis on the emotional reaction to the work. The model's major emphasis is on the role of learning and passion. We can *learn* to be more passionate people.

> Howard Roark (Rand, 1943), in *The Fountainhead*, said,
>
> I have, let's say, sixty years to live. Most of that time will be spent working. I've chosen the work I want to do. If I find no joy in it, then I'm only condemning myself to sixty years of torture. And I can find the joy only if I do my work in the best way possible to me. But the best is a matter of standards—and I set my own standards. I inherit nothing. I stand at the end of no tradition. I may, perhaps, stand at the beginning of one. p. 24-25.

Emotions in work have not held a very high place – usually they are reluctantly acknowledged and quickly rationalized, or totally denied as existing at all (Beres & Wilson, 1997). In contrast, we advocate for the rightful and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

motivational place of emotions within organizations and the importance of capitalizing on the energy and motivating power of passion. With the increased attention to a values based organization, our model is a step forward in helping develop leaders, employees and workplaces. Through passion and occupational intimacy - an emotional connection to one's work - motivation and productivity can be augmented.

References

Apps, J. W. (1996). *Teaching from the heart*. Florida: Krieger.

Baumeister, R. F. & Bratslavsky, E. (1999). Passion, intimacy, and time: Passionate love as a function of change in intimacy. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 49-67.

Bennis, W. (1998). Leaders in transition. *Executive Excellence,. 15*. Shelton Marketing Communications, 5-6.

Beres, Z. & Wilson, G. (1997). Essential emotions: The place of passion in a feminist network. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 8, 171-182.

Berscheid, E. (1983). Emotion. In H. H. Kelley, E. Berscheid, A. Christensen, J. H. Harvey, T. L. Huston, G. Levinger, E. McClintock, L. A. Peplau, & D. R. Peterson (Eds.) *Close relationship*, 110-168. New York: Freeman,.

Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (1995). *Leading with soul: An uncommon journey of spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Bova, B. & Kroth, M (1999). Closing the gap: The mentoring of Generation X. *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education*. Summer, 7-17.

Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Davis, K. E., & Todd, M. J. (1982). Friendship and love relationships. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.) *Advances in descriptive psychology*, 2, 79-112. Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Freeman, W. C. (1993). *Construction of the psychological variable passion and its relationship to productivity in selected figures*. Ann Arbor: UMI .

Handy, C. (1994). *The age of paradox*. Boston: Harvard Business School.

Harvey, A. (1994). *The way of passion*. Berkeley, CA: Frog, Ltd

Kouzes, J. M. & Mico, P. (1979). Domain theory: An introduction to organizational behavior in human service organizations. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 15, 449-469.

Loysk, B. (1997). Generation X: What they think and what they plan to do. The Futurist. March-April, 39-44.

Rand, A. (1943). *The Fountainhead*. New York: Signet.

Senge, P. (1999). Walk into the future. *Executive Excellence, 16*. Shelton Marketing Communications, 9-10.

Sternberg, R. J. (1988). *The triangle of love*. New York: Basic Books.

Tulgan, B. (1998). *FAST Feedback*. Amherst, Mass: HRD Press.

Webster's new world dictionary (3rd ed.). (1990). New York: Warner Press.

Wheatly, M. J. (1994). *Leadership and the new science: Learning about organizations from an orderly universe*. San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler.

Wolfe, D. (1998). The psychological center of gravity. *American Demographics, 20*. American Demographics Inc., 16-19.

The Influence of Multiple Performance Interventions on Employee Turnover: A Case Study

Tim Hatcher
University of Louisville

Most research on employee turnover is survey-based research that gives only a brief "snap-shot" of turnover and its possible causes. There is little or no research that addressed turnover as a specific performance problem through application of a qualitative approach using multiple interventions designed to minimize or correct the problem. This study addressed employee turnover in a textile plant as a multi-faceted performance issue. It also identified various causes of turnover through a performance analysis and through the results of implementation of multiple interventions that were designed to influence employee turnover.

Keywords: Employee Turnover, Qualitative Research, Performance Analysis

Employee turnover is a costly and systemic performance problem, particularly in textile-related industries that use skilled and semi-skilled labor. It is estimated that the annual per-person costs of turnover ranges between $1,200 and $20,000 depending on the position, and may be as high as $40,000 (Mercer, 1998).

A textile manufacturing company located in a mid-western metropolitan area had an annual employee turnover rate that approached 90%. The high turnover rate negatively impacted the plant's ability to meet the established efficiency ratios and many operator trainees failed to complete their training probation. Although the plant's management team was concerned about the excessive employee turnover rate, no strategy existed to address the issue. A research project was designed and implemented to address the high operator turnover. The 30 month long project used qualitative case study methods to analyze data and develop and evaluate interventions that influenced the excessive turnover rate.

Most research on employee turnover is survey-based research that gives only a brief "snap-shot" of turnover and its possible causes. Although much research is published on turnover and related antecedents to employee turnover (Buchko, 1992; Cohen, 1993), a review of literature uncovered no research that addressed turnover as a specific performance problem through application of a qualitative approach using multiple interventions designed to minimize or correct the problem.

The present study addressed employee turnover in a textile plant as a multi-faceted performance issue. This means that performance was defined as the results of more than one action or influence. It also identified various causes of turnover through a performance analysis and through the results of implementation of multiple interventions that were designed to influence employee turnover.

The problem and theory under investigation stemmed from a general research question of "To what extent does the use of a performance improvement process influence employee turnover? This question represented the comprehensive theory of performance improvement as an influence on turnover (Yin, 1994).

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual model used in this study was a synthesization of a performance improvement model and a naturalistic paradigm represented by qualitative methodology. The performance improvement model consisted of the following steps: (a) performance analysis, (b) identify applicable intervention(s), (c) design and develop interventions, (d) implement, and (e) evaluate effectiveness of interventions.

Although performance improvement is typically viewed in the positivist frame, the present study approached the performance problem of turnover from a multiple-reality, value-bound; time-and-context bound, and researcher as participant framework (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, the performance problem was addressed with a general process model coupled with a methodology and a research paradigm based on naturalistic inquiry.

Copyright © 2000, Timothy Gary Hatcher

Research Question

The research question used to guide the study was "How do multiple or multi-dimensional interventions based on a performance analysis affect the identified high employee turnover rate?"

Methodology

Given the focus of the research problem, qualitative strategies were appropriate to guide the collection of data. There were two reasons why qualitative methods were preferred over quantitative methods for this research: First, the nature of the work environment, the complexity of the performance problem, and its relation to training dictated an "in-depth" level of understanding of the phenomenon of turnover and its context than quantitative research might produce (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994); and, second results of the literature review indicated less than satisfactory results on reduction of turnover using quantitative measures.

The phenomenon under investigation was employee turnover. The context of the study was a textile organization including the subjects impacted by the phenomenon. Employee turnover in this study was defined as turnover of operator trainees.

Case study methods included one-on-one interviews, review of the organization's extant data, observations, scripts, and use of nominal groups. In addition to data collection activities trustworthiness was established through prolonged and persistent engagement, a clear audit trail, triangulation of data and methods, member checks, and peer debriefings. Collected data were confidential and participants' anonymity was protected throughout the study.

Site and population sample

The organization was a textile manufacturer (plant) situated in a mid-western metropolitan area. The employment environment for the duration of this study was a restrained labor market. Restrained inferred a low unemployment rate (approximately 3%) coupled with limited availability of skilled or semi-skilled labor. Employment in the region was restricted primarily to low-wage, low-skilled labor and limited technical and service-oriented employment.

The population under study was approximately 600 employees including representatives of the bargaining unit that made up approximately 50% of the hourly workforce. The workforce was primarily female (85%) and diverse with approximately 60% Caucasian, 14% Asian, 3% African-American, and 23% Hispanic-origin. Subjects were directly related to or impacted by the phenomenon of employee turnover.

The sample included the plant and personnel managers, five plant supervisors, 12 operator trainees, six " leavers," e.g. former employees, seven incumbent operators, two maintenance employees, eight trainers, three bargaining unit representatives, and one personnel staff for a total of 46 employees interviewed and/or observed. This purposive sample was necessary to insure that information-rich cases would manifest the phenomenon (Patton, 1990).

Data collection

Data collection extended over approximately 30 months and was documented and divided into three parts: (a) an initial performance analysis, (b) implementation and investigation of several interventions based on results of the performance analysis, and (c) analysis and revision of orientation training.

Data were collected using (a) document review, (b) individual and group interviews, and (c) observations (Patton, 1990). Document review included materials such as production data, personnel records, exit interviews, and communication documents.

Standardized, open-ended and scripted interviews were conducted with "leavers" (past employees), the plant and personnel manager, personnel staff, trainers, operator trainees, and supervisors. The interview process was planned and piloted prior to actual interviews. All interviews were audiotaped, documented, or both, and included information on the subject/employee and the context of the interview (date, time, place, surroundings,

etc.). In addition to standardized interviews, many informal conversational interviews were documented by contact sheet to support and validate the more formal standardized interviews (Patton, 1990).

Observations were conducted in several situations including meetings, social events such as eating lunch and taking breaks, during training sessions, and informal conversations. This prolonged engagement was essential to ensure research rigor and trustworthiness of data.

Observation was continuous and occurred throughout the study. Several hundred hours were spent in the plant by the researchers. In qualitative research, the researcher is a participant in the observation of the place, the actors, and activities under study. This prolonged engagement between the researchers and subjects was essential to ensure trustworthiness of the data collected. Prolonged engagement also served to increase familiarity and build trust with employees being observed.

The research strategy included data triangulation to insure trustworthiness of data collected. Trustworthiness was addressed through the use of (a) multiple methods and data sources, (b) member checks to cross-check the accuracy of findings and interpretations (c) an audit trail that used a numeric coding system to insure tracebility of data to its specific source, and (d) guarding against evidentiary inadequacy by collecting enough data, triangulating the data, identifying key aspects of complexity of the phenomenon, identity of disconfirming data, and reviewing discrepant cases in the study. Member checks included asking participants to verify interview data and having researchers review all interview data for consistency and accuracy.

Results and Findings

Results are categorized and discussed in three phases: (a) pre-analysis, (b) analysis, and (c) post-analysis. A brief review of how the data were analyzed precedes the discussion of results.

Data analysis

The goal of qualitative data analysis was to identify patterns in the data. All data received a code to insure tracebility (I = interview data, D = documents, and O = observations). All data were reviewed and reduced to identify categories, find connections between categories, and select core categories and validate others (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Data were entered into and manipulated by an analysis software package called NUDIST running on a personal computer.

Pre-analysis phase

The pre-analysis phase included activities designed to familiarize the research team with the *context* of the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. employee turnover in a textile manufacturer. Results of the review of literature related to turnover, review of the regional employment situation, and awareness of culture and turnover-related issues within the plant are discussed below.

The review of related literature revealed that turnover was a common problem in the textile industry and that certain variables such as job satisfaction and work commitment were related to turnover. Few studies were located that examined the influence of training on turnover and most of the research focused on a single intervention such as an increase in pay or benefits to reduce turnover. Review of the regional employment data indicated that low unemployment had impacted many employers by increasing turnover in lower paying, low and semi-skilled job categories.

During the pre-analysis, the research team comprised on a consultant/professor and several graduate students in HRD spent time in the plant talking with operators, trainers, and other key employees, and observing. In addition to familiarizing the researchers with the plant culture, these activities enabled them to assess employees' attitudes toward the turnover problem and the research team's potential involvement. This period of familiarization served to build trust, a critical part of qualitative data collection. Another outcome of the pre-analysis activities was the discovery that many employees had ideas about possible causes of turnover, and they seemed relieved that the research team was, according to a trainer, "finally getting something going... on turnover" (I-24).

Analysis phase

The analysis phase included collecting data from various sources, in-process data analysis, assuring trustworthiness, and final analysis of all data. Analyses took place during the 26-month period following the pre-analysis. Coding of data allowed the researchers to develop an overall theoretical framework for the analysis phase that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to accomplish with such a large amount of textual data. For example, the axial codes in Table 1 were the basis for selective codes that formed the theoretical framework of the project. This means that as data were collected, axial codes, that are the broad constructs of the study, were developed and constantly reviewed against selective codes that resulted from the axial code analysis. Selective codes included (a) performance analysis, (b) interventions, and (c) organizational leadership and climate.

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that data be displayed so that the consumer of the data can draw their own conclusions; thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the data. For example, Table 1 shows the relationship between the phenomenon under investigation (turnover), the various contexts under which it occurred (work and employment environment), the on-going strategies that affected turnover, and the consequences of interventions.

The analysis was a causal condition that influenced the phenomenon of employee turnover and was a focal point for the plant's leaders and employees to finally begin to address the problem of turnover. The analysis resulted in a general profile of the organization and of employee turnover.

Results of the analysis phase revealed that (a) overall turnover in the plant was approximately 7% per month or 84% per year, (b) turnover was highest in two of the plants' eight production lines, (c) approximately half of "leavers" were female Caucasians and approximately half were male Hispanics, (d) turnover occurred during the first 21 weeks of employment, and (e) orientation training was a possible cause. Several possible influences of employee turnover were identified. They were (a) operator and trainer training, (b) management/ supervisory issues, (c) organizational communications, and (d)

Table 1. Axial codes' relationships

Phenomenon	Context	Intervening Conditions	Action/Interaction Strategies	Consequences
turnover	regional culture	labor market	interventions	train trainers
		leadership	redesign activity	train supervisors
	organizational culture	corporate pressures	plant closure rumour	job restructure
	corporate & industry culture	organizational climate		change communication strategy

orientation training. Appropriate interventions for each of the possible contributors to turnover were considered and discussed with plant management.

Due to the trainers' identified lack of skills and knowledge and the suspected direct impact this deficiency had on operator training, it was decided that a more thorough analysis of all eight trainers was required. Each of the eight trainers was observed and interviewed. In addition, operator trainees, trainer's supervisors, and other employees such as maintenance workers who interfaced with trainers were interviewed.

Analyses of transcribed and coded notes and interviews indicated that trainers (a) were required to perform other duties besides training, (b) were not competent as trainers and some were not competent as operators, (c) were not given enough time to perform required training duties, and (d) were expected to be proficient in various non-training production operations. Having researchers review coded results with paradigm models and reviewing and analyzing the extent that coding was consistent with the paradigm model triangulated this data.

Post-analysis Phase

The post-analysis phase began shortly after the management report on the pre-analysis and analysis phases of the project. The post-analysis phase included drawing conclusions and recommendations from phases one and two, analyzing intervention needs and sequencing and implementing interventions, collecting and analyzing data from interventions, and drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Immediately following the report to management the research team leader (now the sole researcher) reviewed plant turnover data. Overall plant operator turnover had decreased approximately 10% during the analysis phase (D-159-160).

Additional analysis was required to develop effective interventions from conclusions and recommendations generated during phases one and two. For example, the researcher asked key employees questions concerning the validity and usefulness of the analysis phase and what they thought should happen next. Results revealed that (a) the analysis disclosed more information than many thought it would, (b) employees were surprised that "university people could do something that was real" (I-148), (c) the results of the analyses were not surprising; i.e., several interviewed employees felt that they already knew the causes of turnover and thus the analysis simply validated those assumptions, and (d) the analysis should stop and "something's gotta be done to fix turnover, not just study it to death" (I-622).

As a result of the pre-analysis and analysis phases it was decided that since the trainer analysis had received prior attention, management/supervisory issues and organizational communication should be examined next, followed by an examination of operator trainer interventions, and then orientation training. The researcher facilitated discussions using nominal group methodologies that resulted in consensus on interventions. Plant management believed that the implementation of one or two interventions would provide the best and most expeditious return on investment and that the performance analysis had produced sufficient evidence to support the implementation.

Four interventions were identified and discussed for each of the four influences of turnover. Namely, (a) supervisory issues, (b) organizational communication, (c) trainer issues, and (d) orientation training. Each of the four influences of turnover and their interventions are discussed.

Management/supervisory issues. Results of interviews revealed those supervisory-related interventions such as (a) identification and review of specific job responsibilities with each supervisor, and (b) reallocation of production responsibilities for key supervisors should be addressed first.

The job responsibility review required an examination of job specifications followed by a review of job responsibilities by each line supervisor. Supervisors said that their job responsibilities needed to be revised to reflect actual tasks being performed. As a result, the researcher modified and validated supervisor job responsibilities. Since overall turnover rates remained stable during this time period, this intervention did not appear to influence employee turnover (D-189, D-196).

The reallocation of production responsibilities for key employees may have effected turnover. Key supervisor responsibilities were changed such as reducing the dependence on trainers for production duties. Results of observations of and interviews with key supervisors and their subordinates revealed that they believed the intervention was beneficial and had an effect on turnover. Turnover data supported a reduction in turnover in the production line of approximately 15% (D-220).

Organizational communication. Organizational communication was the second influence on turnover that required implementation of the three intervention(s) of (a) a reduction in the amount of communication-oriented paperwork, (b) revision in use of the plant electronic public address system, and (c) increased use of supervisors as communication "conduits" between management and the plant workforce. Each intervention is discussed below.

Respondents perceived that the introduction of the electronic bulletin board was especially valuable. The new bulletin board had bilingual capabilities and all messages were transmitted in both English and Spanish.

Shortly after installation of the electronic bulletin board, the paperwork reduction and supervisor communications interventions were simultaneously executed. A computer system was recently installed in the plant offices. Observations revealed that the computers had limited use by line supervisors and trainers, and were used almost exclusively by management and engineering personnel (O-429, O-501).

The intervention that focused on supervisors assuming the role of communications "conduits" was discussed with key employees and management. It was decided that to be successful in that role, supervisors needed interpersonal communications skills and knowledge training. Management decided that supervisory training should take place after the other interventions were implemented and their effects on turnover evaluated.

Unfortunately, due to timing and priorities for other interventions, supervisory training was not implemented and its effect on turnover was thus not applicable.

During the paperwork reduction and public address system interventions, overall turnover rates declined by approximately 3% (D-1229). However, since several interventions were carried out simultaneously and one was omitted, it was not possible to isolate the specific effect of any one intervention on employee turnover. An increase in regional unemployment to over 5% may have had an impact on plant turnover in that more people were seeking employment, which may have affected employees' decisions to stay or leave.

Trainer training. Trainer training was the third influence on turnover investigated. Interventions consisted of "train-the-trainer" and skills training for trainers. An external consultant was contracted to develop train-the-trainer and trainer skills programs. Comprehensive training in operator skills and "train-the-trainer" skills were conducted over a 20-week period. Observations of training sessions and interviews with trainers revealed that they were satisfied with the training program, they felt learning new skills affected their trainees' abilities to learn, and they believed the training program affected operator trainee turnover.

During the train-the-trainer program and for approximately one month after completion of the training, overall plant turnover fluctuated plus or minus one percent. Therefore, trainer skill development, although important to management and the trainers, did not appear to have had an immediate influence on turnover.

Orientation training. Development and implementation of a realistic job preview (RJP) process to be used during orientation training was the final intervention addressed. Further analysis including observations, extant data review, and interviews with personnel impacted by the orientation process was conducted prior to selection and implementation of the RJP intervention.

Results revealed that (a) orientation was inconsistent, (b) although orientation was done in English, approximately 50% of trainees were Hispanic, and, (c) participants perceived orientation training to be too lengthy (I-1230), objectives were not clear (I-1303), and content was too complicated (I-1342).

Results of the analysis of orientation training, time constraints imposed by management and knowledge of the workforce supported the use of a videotaped RJP. The video was developed and pilot-tested as part of a planned overall revision of the orientation process, not as an independent intervention. That is, following results of the pilot test of the RJP videotape, the entire orientation training process would be revised, pilot tested, and implemented.

Upon completion of the videotaped RJP, a pilot test was planned and implemented. The pilot test consisted of a short questionnaire completed by all prospective employees. Items included questions about the videotape's objectives, clarity of information, quality, to what extent the videotape helped prospective employees make a decision whether or not to work for the company, and if the videotape helped them understand the operator job. Once prospective employees viewed the RJP videotape, they were given the option to self-select out of the hiring process or move on to the next phase.

The questionnaire was used weekly for approximately 6 weeks. Of a total of 123 questionnaires, 99 were completed and usable. A content analysis of the questionnaires revealed that the videotape (a) was easy to understand, (b) objectives were clear, (c) helped prospective employees understand that the company would be a good place to work, (d) helped them know more about the company and the job, (e) was of high quality, and (f) helped reduce turnover (D-1117).

Plant turnover rates during the RJP intervention declined approximately 22% (D-398-D-402). During this time, the majority of new hires were assigned to the production line that had a history of higher than average operator turnover (D-119, O-128). Turnover rates of trainees in this production line declined approximately 40% during this same time period (D-421). Again, unemployment rates in the region remained higher than average and may have had some effect on plant employee turnover.

The following external and internal events forced plant management to terminate he research project including the in-process orientation training revision: (a) escalation of a corporate-wide redesign process within the plant, (b) several local and national labor-relations issues requiring immediate attention, and (c) persistent rumors of an imminent plant closure.

The action/interaction strategies mentioned in Table 2 were evidenced in these internal and external factors. The plant manager discussed with the researcher on several occasions the impact of both the redesign effort and rumors of possible plant closures on the turnover efforts. The plant manager indicated that "the objectives of the redesign are not being made clear to everybody involved" (I-3337). The issue of plant closures surfaced during several conversations around the future of the facility. The plant manager said, "I don't really know what will happen... I just hope we aren't doing all this effort for nothing. It just wouldn't be fair" (I-1238).

In summary, the plant turnover rate at the beginning of this study was approximately 84% annually. During the study the turnover rate remained consistently lower and for a short time dropped to approximately 35% (D-2224). Overall, employee turnover averaged approximately 60% for the duration of the study. Therefore, operator turnover declined by approximately 24% (D-2229, D-4478, I-3173).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The reason for the less than satisfactory results on attempts to reduce employee turnover may be those multi-disciplinary causes of turnover are generally addressed with uni-faceted interventions. Beer (1990, 1996) argued for multiple methods and interventions to solve organizational performance problems such as turnover. Beer (1996) stated that limited methods resulted in a single intervention being applied with minimal results. In a related study, Swanson and Zuber (1996) found that a naïve over reliance on employee surveys as a single data collection process resulted in a failed organization development intervention.

The present study addressed the deficiency of performance-based research on employee turnover using a qualitative methodology. Additionally, this study added "field-based" naturalistic research to the human resource development and employee turnover literature.

The multiple intervention approach applied in this research appears to have influenced turnover. Thus, cursory analyses coupled with single methods or unidimensional interventions may have inconsistent and even unfortunate results. It is also interesting and meaningful to reflect upon this research in light of the many environmental variables, such as the labor market and rumors of a plant closure, that had a potential, albeit indirect, influence on results.

Future research might focus more on environmental variables, both internal and external, and identify the impact they have on turnover and other human resource issues. Finally, rigorous qualitative analyses and the use of multiple interventions may provide a better return on the extensive resources and efforts required influencing the dramatic financial costs of employee turnover.

It is important to emphasize that the causal relationships between a performance analysis, subsequent interventions, and employee turnover may be ambiguous if not misleading. To assume that implementation of any intervention has a direct and/or causal effect on a specific and complex performance problem such as employee turnover, may be overly simplistic. However, to disregard a qualitative, naturalistic approach to employee turnover as was accomplished in this research belittles alternative ways to view and solve ubiquitous human resource problems within complex and ever-changing organizations.

Finally, conclusions must be addressed in light of problems such as evidentiary inadequacy, which can cause erroneous assumptions and false interpretation of data. One explanation of this anomaly may be the effect of the performance analysis and the use of the RJP on the phenomenon under study. In other words, the strength of the PA and the RJP may have overridden the influence of other concepts such as organizational leadership and climate within this particular time, place, and context. Another plausible explanation of the discrepant case may be that stresses caused by redesign efforts and persistent rumors of plant closure could have had an influence on employee's decisions to stay with or leave the company, although this notion was not fully supported by the data.

How the research contributes to new knowledge in HRD

Three important lessons that add to new knowledge in HRD were learned as a result of this research. First, unidimensional interventions should be avoided when addressing complex human resource problems such as employee turnover.

Second, the analysis served as a catalyst for plant management, and specifically the plant manager to begin a plant wide focus on the issue of employee turnover. As a result, the performance analysis served as a causal condition for the problem of employee turnover.

Third, prolonged engagement was an important factor in building trust and obtaining trustworthy data. The continued collaboration among the researcher, the plant manager, and several key employees over a long period of time strengthened the relationship between analysis and development of interventions, and results. Additionally, the ability of the researcher to gain almost unlimited access to the plant for the duration of the long-term study was a constant reminder to concerned employees that the issue of employee turnover was unresolved.

One possible conclusion is that a performance analysis may be a possible vehicle for researchers and others to study workplace issues requiring deeper and more meaningful investigations than *de facto* surveys or questionnaires can typically produce.

In addition to prolonged engagement, the overall rigor of the methods used in this research may have mitigated some of the validity concerns around the cause-effect relationship between interventions and employee turnover. Observing and constantly tracking quantitative data such as turnover rates during a performance analysis and implementation of multiple interventions may enhance the legitimacy of critically viewing the relationship between a given performance problem such as employee turnover and specific interventions.

References

Beer, V. (1996). All of the intervention eggs were in one basket: A response to Swanson and Zuber. *Performance Improvement Quarterly, 9*, 79-81.

Beer, V. (1990). Surveymania in HRD program evaluation. *Performance Improvement Quarterly,3*, 2-11.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Buchko, A.A. (1992). Employee ownership, attitudes, and turnover: An empirical assessment. *Human Relations, 45*, 711-733.

Cohen, A. (1993). Organizational commitment and turnover: A meta-analysis. *Academy of Management Journal, 36*(5), 1140-1157.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage publications.

Mercer, M.W. (1988). Turnover: Reducing the costs. *Personnel, 65*, 36-42.

Miles, B.M., & Huberman, M.A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Strauss, A.L, & Corbin, J. (1990*). Basics of qualitative research-grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage publication.

Swanson, R.A., & Zuber, J.A. (1996). A case study of a failed organization development intervention rooted in the employee survey process.*Performance Improvement Quarterly, 9*, 42-56.

Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.